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# AT LARGE IN GERMANY



“Die Welt durchaus ist lieblich anzuschauen,  
Forzüglich aber schön die Welt der Dichter;  
Auf bunten, hellen oder silbergrauen  
Gefilden, Tag und Nacht, erglanzen Lichter.”

—*Goethe.*



# At Large in Germany

## A Glance at Some of its Beauties and People Through American Eyes



By Robert Bolwell

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TO  
"MOTHER NEVEL,"  
THE UNMENTIONED HEROINE  
OF THAT VERY EVENTFUL SUMMER  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

*Of this edition but Three Hundred Copies were  
printed. This Book is Number 7a*

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## FOREWORD

The *ego* appears in this volume with almost auto-biographical frequency. To prevent alarm, therefore, a word of explanation may be necessary. The writer's presence was vital to the impressions here recorded, but, at the same time, he had a double role to play. For, in addition to being his own insignificant self, bent upon his own enjoyment, he had to represent, in all things that entered his notebook, that vague, mysterious nonentity—the Average American.

It is this latter character, this *alter ego*, who is so talkative about his ideas and his impressions in the following. It is the Average American who sees, who enjoys, and who scoffs. It is true that no one (not even the author himself) cares about the personal *ego*; when he shaves, with whom he bunks at night, and how he enjoys his dinners. But when this important figure, the Average American, so often mentioned of late but never met, so much quoted but never heard, when he is near unto seasickness, or when he is bored, we listen attentively. Nothing in the life of this great hero is too insignificant for our notice.

In this light then, perhaps the account of the Average American's summer in Germany will seem all too brief and fragmentary. If so, it is because the true first person was too busy with his own affairs to *Boswellize* the hero-speaker of this tale.



## **Part I.—The Voyage**



## THE VOYAGE

**I**N beginning this account, I do so in defiance of the trite words of the worthy poet, John Donne, on this and similar chatterings:

“My silence (give) to any who abroad hath been.”

Perhaps this stern gentleman did not possess the spirit of wonder with which I was endowed—or more likely, perhaps he never “abroad hath been.” How many Donnes there may be today, I do not know. I do not, however, depreciate their attitude; I only plod on, praying their mercy as I go.

For to all of us, our first trip abroad is a looming event in our lives. It represents the realization of a long-cherished desire. Whatever more it represents depends upon the individual. Sometimes it is disillusionment, again an unhoped-for delight, but it is always an experience.

Upon an early July morning I staggered up the gang-plank and boarded the “Vaterland,” heralded the world over as “the largest ship afloat.” It was her third trip from New York to Hamburg, and even in the midst of a world which changes the new into the old over night, still caused explosive ejaculations of wonder to burst from thousands of passengers

and parted friends clamoring about the dock, companionways and decks of the steamer. I glanced along her nine hundred and fifty feet of side, thought of her fifty-eight thousand tons of weight, and very inadequately expressed my feelings by a "Gosh!"—and tumbled aboard.

The air was filled with smells and sounds. Cooked cabbage, tarred ropes, the filthy North River water, all produced a nauseating combination, while the creaking of pulleys, the chugging of steam deck winches, the blare of bands, and the varying qualities of cries, orders, messages and farewells, all united in drowning individual thought and personal impression in a whirlpool of confusion.

After stowing my baggage in the one-fourth of a state-room allotted to me, I steered the little company of friends who accompanied me thus far to a comparatively secluded corner of the deck, and spent a half hour in repeating absent-minded farewells and promises to write volumes of letters, wishing all the time that the boat would set out and end this mad tumult about me.

White-coated stewards soon rushed frantically through the crowds, bawling "All ashore!" and in response, the decks thinned out and the pier became more compactly massed with human units, combined to form a swaying, crying area. Beside the gang-plank, fervent embraces were exchanged between parting friends. Tears and moaning added a touch of desolation to the scene. Many years before, in a railroad station with my father, I pointed at a pair

about to be separated, who were ridiculous in the profundity of their grief. My father, who was ever quick to appreciate human nature, seized that occasion to speak of the sacredness of human emotion, and explained the inner meaning of so strange an external evidence. I remembered it just as I appreciated some of the ludicrous scenes before me—and refrain from their recitation here.

I then perched myself upon a life-boat stanchion and gazed upon the pier. The plank was lowered, ropes cast off, and the tiny tugs, like ducklings paddling about a matronly dam, began their work. The deep bass siren of the ship bellowed for clearway, the towing lines became taut, and the little tugs began what seemed their futile task. It was Gulliver and the Pygmies, and, true to the allusion, the Pygmies conquered. A quiver, and suddenly the jammed wharf seemed to be sliding along beside us; we were off!

In a single voice, the packed humanity shouted its farewell. Handkerchiefs waved in a sea of white-caps, and gradually calmed to a less frantic emotion—they covered eyes. Five thousand unuttered prayers ascended for the safety and well-being of the vessel and her creatures, five thousand smiling lips, tear-filled eyes, and aching hearts, and I dared call that assembly of love a mass! Each man and woman there had an individual, separate joy and sorrow, their thoughts went out to the monster ship and rested upon different complements of their love, but the unity of common emotion made them kin.

The huge length of the steamer was now in mid-stream, blocking the smaller traffic. All kinds of craft snorted and shrieked indignantly at the slothful giantess in their path. She slowly headed downstream, towards the open sea. I waved a goodbye to the blurred faces of friends on shore, and went below. My trip abroad had really begun.

This is a fitting place to make a confession: I traveled second class. After my experience and observation, I shall always do so. Not to mention the financial compensation for this sacrifice of pride, there is a host of arguments for this determination. In the second cabin one meets people, and usually of the most companionable sort, not worn-out social creatures, who insist that their deck chairs are their castles, about which are wide and deep moats of convention, and from whom the lonely and sociable individual is repelled by the consciousness of his crying sin, mediocrity.

We glided under the shadows of lower New York, down to the upper bay. From my feeling of consciousness, I should say that the verdant Liberty and the city she illumines slid past us, for it seemed impossible that the huge island we were on was a ship, and steaming, with increasing speed, through the Narrows. I went into the *salon* to write to my friends brief notes, which should go back by the pilot. I told them all, with perfect truth, that thus far, on the first twenty minutes of my voyage, I felt no trace of seasickness. As that interesting topic

holds the attention of every traveler, I could not escape it.

I went below to establish myself in my new quarters, and found the stateroom overflowing with confusion. My three roommates were attempting what I wished to do. Let me introduce them. As I entered the narrow door, I bumped my head against something soft and clammy. Snakes, dead arms and other unaesthetic images seized upon my brain. With thumping heart, I dodged and cast a furtive glance upward. It was a long, sinuous sausage! Its keeper and owner was bowing and apologizing before me.

I turned in wonderment from the suspended provender to its caretaker, and gasped again. I have seen many pictures of gnomes and similar folk with whom Rip Van Winkle foregathered, but always with a skeptical eye. I now know they exist, for one stood before me. He was little, he was fat, he had a long cataract of a beard, and a red ball of a nose. I unwittingly looked about for the cask of ale which usually accompanies his prototype. His words I could not understand, nor himself, nor a large bag of biscuits which lay with gaping mouth, upon his berth.

"Don't mind him. Come on in," sounded a voice from a pile of shirts and *articles de toilette* heaped about half-opened suitcases. A young American emerged from the litter and gave me his name and hand.

"I guess we bunk together," he said, and added,

jerking his head towards the dwarf, with a wink, "Old Melchizedek here doesn't understand English."

With him, as with myself, the trip was an event in his life. It was his first crossing, and he was on the alert for the unusual. Lo, we had it right in the room with us!

"I think he's a priest or rabbi of some sort," I ventured after noticing a short, black apron fastened to an all-enveloping vest which the little man wore.

"He must be something like that," my companion returned. "I've heard that those chaps never eat with the others. They always eat their own food. He certainly has enough to last him the trip; one of his cases is full of sausages and other things."

The fourth inhabitant of the room now appeared in the door. He gave the gnome a hasty, comprehensive glance and then stared at his miscellaneous supply of provisions. He looked at us, evidently with more approval.

"Doesn't he think he's going to be fed on the trip?" he demanded in a coarse, bass voice. I then recognized him, by his speech, as the party who was a moment before wrangling with the room-steward outside, insisting that he be provided with hot water for shaving, that he be called each morning at a certain time, and numerous other attentions. Then, recollecting his argument with the steward, who understood no English, and gave him no evident satisfaction, he continued:

"Never have I seen such a line as this. I've been

over twelve times, and never had to put up with such accommodations. You'd think we were traveling steerage the way we're treated." He went on in this strain. I remembered having read and heard of his type, the kind that travels second-class and has to explain it, coupled with frequent allusions to his experience and many crossings. He thought, no doubt, that the best way to display his knowledge of steamship companies and ocean travel would be to abuse his present situation.

He was a heavy, brutish Jew, traveling perhaps for some American dry goods concern. Fortunately for the other young man and myself, he spent most of his days and nights in the smoking room playing poker, and with the exception of an occasional meeting during the morning's shave, when he complained vigorously about the food and service, we rarely saw him.

The little rabbi, however, continued to be a source of delighted wonder to us. Every day distinguished him in our eyes as a mysterious personage, well worthy of study. Each morning he prayed at the port-hole, reading aloud from his ritual, and arrayed in a curious regalia, consisting, as far as I could see, of a strange sort of blanket, clasped about his breast, and a box-like cap, with an emblem of some kind over the brow. I trust that those who know more of this will forgive my ignorance. On the last day of the trip, when we were arranging our things for custom inspection, he seemed to have as much food unconsumed as in the beginning. Nearly

a whole valise was taken up with crackers and sausage. It must have been a long pilgrimage he had prepared for.

After arranging my effects in my new abode, I inspected as much of the ship as was open to passengers of the second cabin. The smoking and grill room was the popular masculine resort. A bar which would have honored a jockey-club presided over the life of this room, and ere Sandy Hook was passed, it had begun its jovial duties. Conveniently opposite was the ladies' *salon*, where already, the dowagers were ensconced, arraigning unsuspecting matrons who should have been members of this high court, but, owing to satisfactory bachelors who had been early discovered, rebelled against this passive participation in the affairs of romance. Wide, cerise-upholstered chairs and divans such as this room contained, were veritable abettors to gossip. A small, but extensively furnished gymnasium was located on this deck, where for the first few hours, everyone went to try the apparatus. This was the only time I saw it used on the voyage.

By the time Ambrose Channel lightship was passed, and we had bowed an adieu to America, we changed our simile. No longer was this huge thing, containing five thousand creatures, to be considered an island. I was soon forced to recognize it as a ship, for she began to behave as one. Giant waves heaved her up and down, to and fro, and soon that bane of ocean travel, seasickness, spread like an epidemic. At lunch, the tables were crowded, at

four o'clock coffee, a few vacant chairs told their tale, and at dinner, an almost deserted board proclaimed disaster. A sturdy band, mostly men, gathered at the tables. Some were smiling, in the gloating manner of the strong; others were grim and worried, filled with a sense of foreboding and dismal weakness. I was one of the latter. After I bravely conquered the soup, and laid siege to an impregnable steak, I thought a walk on deck would be more to the purpose. In the course of the evening my courage and strength of stomach returned, and I then joined the ranks of the gloaters, and remained true to my colors the remainder of the crossing.

Speculation regarding human nature versus seasickness is always profitable. Why is it that compassionate, loving folk surrender their virtues at this calamity? Friends laugh with barbaric cruelty at the misfortune of their loved ones. A toothache will draw from us our deepest commiseration, but seasickness—never! The man who would not even smile when his friend sits on a Sunday hat chortles fiendishly beside the wan figure in the steamer rug. This dread disease is to be condemned as the most deadly of all poisons to a lasting friendship. The one who is able to eat his five meals a day and who usually knows better than to talk about his appetite, promenades the deck and with an evil smile and stentorian voice discusses the tenderness of the chicken and the dressing of the pork. With the pitching of the vessel, the springs of mercy are closed in the human heart.

While lamenting the inhumanity of *mal de mer*, however, I find there is a chiding word yet to be said. There is the type which, in its perversity, seeks out this living death, corners it, and affords it a ready refuge. We usually consign all old ladies to this group, but we wrong them. All sorts and conditions make up this type. They have heard of seasickness, some have lived through it, and in a feverish anxiety which commences as the hawsers are being slipped from the dock, seek to make or renew its acquaintance. The idea of becoming ill obsesses them. They talk of it to the nearest unfortunate at table, they inquire for it in others, and worry over it themselves, and torment all who have ears, until at last, with a groan of realization, they attain their goal—and are seen no more. There is more reversed Christian Science practiced aboard an ocean liner than of the orthodox sort in a life of faith in this sect, ashore.

After the second day, when the novelty of being afloat no longer fascinates, one makes friends. It was then that I began to appreciate the privileges of second cabin. Without any more cost or effort than was involved in a conventional chat and an exchange of cigars, I was initiated into an impromptu clique, to which I owe many of my pleasant recollections. "Prinz Oskar" was the organizer. The "prinz" was a German grocer, who, the day before, had been classed as a hare-brained simpleton. After an evening of his company, however, I amended the verdict to a fine scout. I bumped into him, on the night of

our acquaintance, as he was singing a German love-song in a falsetto which would have been worth good money in a vaudeville cast, and pirouetting on a careless foot before a heap of fellows crowded into a single deck chair. Instead of an acceptance to my apologies, I received an invitation to join the party. I stayed, and found that the "prinz" was not the victim of dementia, but merely expressing, in his way, the relaxation of a long year behind his counters and the anticipation of a visit with his parents and "lieb' Vaterland."

"Diamond Dick" asserted, by his popularity, the vice-regency of the band. He was an officer of the United States Secret Service, evidently operating on some smuggling case, for his stories as to his trip had the uniformity of his grandmother's "crazy quilt." To word it discreetly, he had the self-confidence and suavity of a ward-heeler. He was crammed with yarns of his experience—and imagination. His forte was in telling gullible passengers that life-boats were to be lowered at midnight for drill, and keeping half the ship on deck to see the event which never happened. He made one confiding gentleman, who brought three quarts of "extra dry" aboard, drink himself ill and share the remainder of his treasure with all comers, by hinting that he would be arrested if he landed with any unconsumed.

To mention at greater length the various pranks that "Diamond Dick" performed would be to prove merely the obvious, that he was a practical joker of Class A. His ready and skillful tongue, accompanied

by a humorous twinkle in his small eyes, with ever a hearty laugh at his own stories, won for him a position of high esteem in the party. But there is a third, though lesser, constellation in this heaven of second-cabin popularity, Jobert, a French wine agent. Caught in the whirlpool of good fellowship, he determined to have a "big time" at all costs. The most likeable qualities that he possessed, however, were his titanic efforts to speak English and, stored under his berth, three cases of champagne, already opened and fast dwindling. He was persistent in his efforts to be companionable. Like a noonday shadow, he was always at our feet.

At such a time as this, one does not choose his comrades; he makes the best of those before him. Hence, haggard business men, blasé moving picture actors, relaxed newspaper writers, and even a cassocked priest gathered before "Prinz Oskar's" wicker throne to exchange ideas, to battle in theological arguments, to barter stories, and to swap tobacco.

And now a word about a very popular pastime—Romance. To speak from general impressions received, one-half of the passengers smile upon it, the others frown. These two groups are divided by the figure forty. The former are younger than forty years, the latter older. Those who are forty, or perilously near it—well, their attitude depends upon temperament and digestion.

Now, there are varying degrees and qualities of ocean-liner love-making, and these also depend upon

age. As a rule, the quality sought, and found, by votaries under the twenty-five year mark is not deemed worthy of the slightest comment from the arm-chair corner of the ladies' *salon*. The next ten years cover the general target of the light artillery. That is to say, the period between twenty-five and thirty-five provides the ordinary, regulation gossip material. But the last five years—here the heavy guns are pointed! The unsuspecting individual between thirty-five and forty is the big game of these grey-haired Dianas. The one who, after a thirty-fifth birthday, has five short, sweet years of romance yet to live is watched struggling up the gang-plank, observed while eating a first luncheon, spied upon during an afternoon promenade, trailed to the lounging room, searched out in all nooks and corners, and is duly arraigned, *in absentia*, before the high tribunal at its evening session. If the unfortunate is a poor male, he is either a disgraceful married man, leaving behind him a trusting wife and neglected children while he is enjoying an indolent holiday, or perhaps a bachelor—and of that horrid type we need say nothing. Should this person be a woman, then she must be a school-teacher who, in her earlier days could not attract a man into her net, or, infinitely worse, she may be a widow! If ever I reach five and thirty, in self-protection, I shall never travel without my mother, or wait until I can safely join the ranks of the frozen-hearted frowners!

When the trip is half over, when one has met all the people he cares to know, and when there is

no other apparent reason for holding a social event, the "amateur concert" is given. I think the "amateur" part of the title should not be so plainly stated on the program, for the event itself always shrieks it. When the word "amateur" is used slightlying, it contains a terrible meaning. I now employ it in that sense. In the case of our concert the favorite Sextette from *Lucia* was played not less than three times, each rendition worse than the preceding, by three willing artists who mumbled, as they left the piano amid the faint, damning applause, something to the effect that they "were only too glad to give the others some amusement."

Some friends of the fat man who offered to do card tricks had captured the necessary properties, and were using them in a pinochle game in the grill. He left to fetch them—and two hours later, when the weary concert sighed its last, we found him with his confreres, playing a good hand, and surrounded by a huge stack of chips. The only humorist in the troupe was an unintentional one. He was an enterprising young chap who thought to have been rewarded by prodigious popularity for organizing the entertainment. He announced the numbers, and in his nervousness skipped about the program so that, when he informed his audience that Miss Lillian Smythe (with a y) would render some popular airs, a heavy, ponderous German arose and sang a Wagnerian score in a hoarse bass.

These words of condemnation for the efforts of deluded people who wished to please us may indeed

betray my ungrateful heart. I can, however, be appreciative of unsuccessful efforts, but never grateful for them.

The evening before land was sighted was the occasion for many "farewell parties". To judge from the commotion caused by it, I believe I was in the most noisy, if not the most sentimental of all. The "prinz" gathered his court about him in the grill, where song and story beguiled the hasting evening. At the proper time, that is, when we had given them an opportunity to "get settled," our court, headed by its sovereign, began its progress to the haunts of the smaller and more romantic groups. Were I speaking instead of writing, I should say plainly that we were bent upon disconcerting lovers. As I am writing, however, I must peregrinate and avoid bluntness at all costs. With royal wisdom, "Prinz Oskar" foresaw that this evening would hide under its soft shadows many a parting scene, and hence his program. Upon telling his subjects that he intended to raid all recesses behind life boats and hatches, he not only kept many from being there themselves, but made them join in the sortie against those we all secretly envied.

Thus, at midnight, when we were invited to leave the smoking room by a lusty, impatient steward who switched off the lights to enforce his request, we tiptoed to the boat deck. Like a band of Sioux, "hell-bent" for scalps, we slid out of the companionway into the softening darkness beyond the range of deck lights. Our noble chieftain, with the remembrance,

no doubt, of the habits of his youth, led us unerringly to the quarry. He pointed out to us a dark mass vaguely outlined in deeper blackness against the surrounding night. He raised his hand. There was a silence of expectation, a silence accompanied by the breaking of the waves against the steel waterline far below, and by the wind playing its aeolian chants upon the steel guide ropes and halyards. His hand fell, and as it hit his side, a dozen lusty voices sang out the "Heigh-li, heigh-lo" so dear to German ears. A frightened steamer chair collapsed, upsetting its abashed occupants. We could feel the blushes on their cheeks and the anger in their hearts as they uttered mechanical laughter.

With the disregard of a pursuing Nemesis, the band pushed on to new exploits. Only twice did our leader err, and we with him. Once we serenaded two burly sailors who grunted some unintelligible German at us. The other time we sang our best and most startlingly, but the dark blur did not move. We approached, puzzled. It was a fire-bucket rack!

The next morning as I picked my way over quivering hose in the pursuit of sufficient appetite with which to battle my breakfast, while the deck hands were "washing down," I saw Europe for the first time. Like a dream-land, the grey, distant hills of Brittany emerged from the slight mist, fast vanishing from the face of the rising sun. It sent a thrill of realization through me. Yonder lay Europe; the land that had always seemed veiled with unattainable dreams was rising from the horizon.

At noon we lay to before Cherbourg, nestling under verdant hillsides. After transferring some passengers to a spacious lighter, we turned northward. Soon the cliffs of England appeared and, before the novelty of staring at this new land had left me, we passed under the Isle of Wight and stood before Portsmouth spread out on the opposite shore. Here a fleet of English dreadnoughts lay at anchor. Little did I think then as I snapped my camera at them, that before two months were gone they would meet in deadly combat with the submarines which I saw on the following day, moored at their berth in Cuxhaven. Our British passengers went over the rail into a side-wheeler which steamed down from Southampton to meet us, and we were soon headed through the Channel for Germany.

After one has read countless tales of the distressful passage of the English Channel, and has been stirred to a vague sense of foreboding by them, he is agreeably disappointed when he sees it calm and still as an artificial lake. It is like emerging from a country graveyard on a dark night, after one has searched and startled in vain for ghosts who would not walk.

That evening, customs inspection of trunks and heavy baggage was held aboard the steamer, "for the convenience of the passengers," as the voluminous company literature informed us. I traveled with a handbag, and was not personally involved. For this reason, I believe I was one of the very few sweet-tempered people on board that night. I descended

into the inferno of confusion. Haughty, green-uniformed officials, who bore themselves with the dignity of the Kaiser they represented, stood erect and firm amid surging billows of exasperated beings. Bedlam reigned. Shrieks and oaths, depending upon sex and degree of indignation, drowned the orders of the officers. The decks were strewn with trunks, garments, and mad people. Groups, forty strong, stormed the citadel of official composure. Each one for himself, and the devil take the last, or the one who excited suspicion. If a patient soul, sitting in desolation on the lid of his unlocked trunk, looked as though he had a box of his favorite cigars at the bottom of it, nothing would do but that he must disclose his private collection of shirts, pajamas and camphored traveling togs to the gaze of this scowling multitude. If this represents convenience, thought I, the landing in New York will be well worth the whole voyage to see.

The next morning's contribution to my discoveries was a good specimen of the English fog. The North Sea must have been under us, but we could not see it. As we curved southward into Cuxhaven, however, the British mist neutralized into a Teutonic clearness, and Germany lay before me. Cuxhaven stretched forth her wharf to greet us. The tiny town had little else to offer, for beside the open dock stood the railroad terminal. Beyond lay a flotilla of warcraft, seeming useless and futile in its idleness. Their fires were soon to be kindled, however. All about lay damp, rich meadow land;

and this was Cuxhaven, the porter to the ancient town of Hamburg. Seizing my hand-bag, and bribing the stewards lined up in formidable array,—all afflicted with the itching hand of Cassius,—I romped down the inclined gangway, and stood upon German soil.



## **Part II.—'Round About Germany**



## 'ROUND ABOUT GERMANY

MORE courage than I possess is required to inflict upon a critical world an account of the beauties of Europe. Few were the untrodden, and undescribed byways which I visited; few also, then, must be my references to the scenes already painted by abler pens. If, therefore, the subject matter is old, there remains but the alternative,—my impressions received from it.

My first experience, then, was the station at Cuxhaven, where we had to wait an hour for the steamship company's special train to take us to Hamburg. Instead of entering a modest waiting-room of the impeachable respectability of American railroads, I found myself whirled into a spacious café, flourishing in its business like a Broadway resort on New Year's Eve. The tables were crowded with thirsty Germans and experience-seeking Americans. I unconsciously looked about for the blushing faces of our American "bachelor ladies," but found them only after peering through the unemptied glasses which they had raised to their lips. Verily, they were "doing as the Romans do." Thus are conventions of a life-time metamorphosed into un-conventions when the human being is transferred into a different environment. Total abstinence ceases to

be a virtue when in a country where temperance is not a profession.

After thus attempting to moralize in the midst of this popular iniquity, I bought a railway time-table, at a good price too, and endeavored to solve some of the mysteries of its algebraic formulae. The simplified sheets which seemed so complicated in an American waiting-room, would be marvels of ingenious arrangement compared to the sturdy tome which bears the same name, "time table," in Germany. A volume of a worthy encyclopedia would be as convenient, and as small. All manner of information poured from its pages, excepting, perhaps, the leaving time of the train you were hastening to board.

Like a babe in a new world, I was smothered under a deluge of new impressions. The train coaches next crave a word. In the four classes of travel on the imperial system there is little difference, save the upholstery and the number, also quality, of one's traveling companions. The first-class compartment holds four people, and in it one sits upon red velvet. In the second, six people rest upon orange plush, and in the third class eight travelers squat on "soft" pine seats, which harden as the journey lengthens. The fourth class holds as many as the occasion requires and the capacity of the car permits; perhaps, also, the wooden seats are a little straighter and harder.

Like the imaginative, aforesaid babe, I shrieked with delight when, *en route* to Hamburg I passed a thatched cottage so common in "old country" etchings, and saw, perched in a huge nest on the chimney

top, a meditative stork, as though fresh from a nursery book. We rushed along, beside the Elbe and between highly cultivated fields. Here and there were stacked bricks of "torf" used as coal by the peasants, and every few minutes we plunged through government fir forests, as neatly arranged as prize peach orchards.

It was nearly ten o'clock, and still the day lingered. I was forced to alter my time reckoning, for in these parts the day extends far into the sleeping hours. Amid a feast of strange sights on which my hungry tourist-eyes delighted, we tore along into Hamburg. Ship-landing day is harvest time for the hotel keepers there. We came in on the third train load, and we were forced to seek third-rate accommodations for the night. A *pension* located at the top of one of the city's seven-storied sky-scrappers was all I could find. I had read of *pensions* in popular European novels, but all romance and novelty were drained from this acquaintance when I realized they were but ordinary boarding-houses.

I sought a late dinner, and found it after roaming along the plaza before the vast railway station, past cafés where populous tables extended to the edge of the side-walk. I walked by these places, thinking I could find one of our respectable institutions designated as restaurants, but none appeared. I suddenly realized that I was not tramping an American street, and ate in what my friends back home would have termed a middle-class saloon. Gradually, under the influence of the strangeness about me which was

steadily growing, I began to feel the distance which separated me from New York. With this sensation of strangeness and separation came the first pangs of homesickness, and before I nibbled at my dessert I was in the depths of "Heimweh." Think of feeling like a lost schoolboy on the first night in Germany, the land of my longing dreams! I scolded and fumed to no avail,—I was homesick.

I was caught in the grip of the eternal dissatisfaction. I had got what I wanted, and was still discontent. Pride, which is ever a powerful ally in moments of weakness, rescued me. If I had confessed my malady, it would always be scored against me, and so, with determination in my heart and a lump in my throat, I decided to "see all Germany, or bust."

My first adventure was with my bed at the *pension*. I had, upon visits to my grandmother, slept with one feather mattress as a bedfellow, but here were two. It demanded more than American endurance to sandwich oneself between these two billowy cream-puffs, especially in torrid July. In defiance of German institutions, therefore, I wrapped myself in a table cover, and, with the feathery monster flung disdainfully upon the floor, dosed into an American dreamland.

Hamburg was up and going long before me. After the typical German breakfast of rolls, jam and coffee, and a quick, tourist-like glance at the city, whose busy markets and deafening port I shall not, as promised, describe, I collapsed into my railway seat on the train for Bremen.

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Either Bremen is a more beautiful city than Hamburg, or I became more Germanized *en route*, for I forgot my homesickness as soon as I saw the vast, flower-tinted park before the Bremen Bahnhof. It seems that there is a park at the end of each of the narrow, turning streets in this ancient city. The clean white buildings are half hidden behind huge flower boxes, bright with lusty nasturtiums, perched at every window ledge. Armed with a basket of cherries hanging on one sleeve, urged upon me by a withered grandam, and with my cocked camera held ready in my hand, I wandered in search of game. I was perhaps as unconscious of the wondering looks bestowed upon me by the busy Bremeners as they were of my secret amusement at their persons and city.

After taking a dozen snap-shots and writing a page of notes, which, as usual, was lost ere the journey ended, I dismissed Bremen with a wave of the hand and a stirrup-cup at the station, and began a long trip to Cologne. I mentally pricked up my ears at the thought of Cologne, for I confess, with reluctance, that I had heard of this town more than of Bremen in my history-studying days, and further, when one tires of the sights of the city, the Rhine beckons.

There is a favorite pastime with German travelers, which seems to claim more whole-hearted attention than the American pinochle game in the smoker on our trains. I do not know what it is called in German—perhaps it has no “regular” name—but I

dubbed it "beer-snatching." Do not condemn this general sport as vulgar, for over-drinking is not one of its characteristics. The law of chance attends to that.

As the long train steams into the station, windows go down and heads pop out from all coaches, and a series of frantic yells and cries are emitted from the intent Germans. The object of this bedlam is a white-aproned youth who pushes a cart outfitted with a keg of beer and pump, along the platform to the coach from which the most persistent calling comes, all the while barking "Restauration!" When the gods are propitious, two boys and carts play the game. As foaming half-liter goblets of fragrant Muenchener are passed up to the *fortunati* hanging from the windows, the neglected contestants in this merry game shriek their threats, entreaties and imprecations until the train passes on. At the next depot, the turmoil begins anew; the disappointed take on new heart, the sated play for the love of the sport, and the pale, aproned youth reaps his harvest of half-marks. The Prohibition Party must have a meagre following here.

While rushing through Duesseldorf, we passed vast fields in which the giant skeletons of Zeppelin sheds were being erected, and above them two eagle-like monoplanes soared in their daily practice. We then marvelled at the infant science of aeronautics, little thinking that in a few months this triumph of man over nature should also triumph over man. In all the cities of Germany the uniforms of the mili-

tary were ever in sight, but in these tranquil days one accepted the sight of furloughed soldiers as incidental to ordinary life in a progressive European state. Those serene days were the calm before the mad tempest.

As the train swung under the mammoth glazed arch of the Cologne station, I caught a glimpse of the lofty towers of the famed cathedral, piercing the clouds with their graceful pointed tops. As I emerged from the station, staggering under packed suit cases, the old Dom startled and oppressed me by its proximity. Grace requires distance for its appreciation. The edifice seemed an overwhelming mountain of masonry, sombre and awful. But the Koelners, bold with familiarity with this Goliath, rushed to and fro under its very feet.

By bitter experience, I have found that the rarest thing in Cologne is a bath. That statement demands further qualification; I meant that a bath for myself was hard to *attain*, together with suitable hotel conveniences. After searching, with growing impatience, for my night's domicile, I capitulated to German institutions, and registered at one of the "finds" of my entire trip. It was the "Hotel Salsruempchen." Its lobby was the tap-room, wherein giant casks and tuns were ensconced like prelates proud. The stone flooring was deliciously damp with the overplus of many drawings. The creatures which inhabited it were as quaint as the painted figures of bearded gnomes upon the walls, and the

ancient building itself would have made a seventeenth century guildhall look infantile.

An evening walk through the slender, winding streets of the old city, with its many-gabled houses meeting in a "united we stand" spirit over the narrow side walks, made me feel as though I were living in a book of history. With truly American curiosity I plunged my head into deep-shadowed doorways, hoping to discover some thrilling adventure which must always happen to those who travel abroad. This expectation of adventure was instilled in me by the episodes of all summer novels. It seems that the unusual must needs happen far from home; one never looks for thrills before his own doorstep—it should be found upon those of others.

Needless to say, I found none, for adventure is foreign to well-ordered German life. After turning a sharp bend in the alley I was pursuing, I caught my first glimpse of the Rhine. What dreams of romance the word Rhine had called up before my imagination ere this glimpse! The Rhine now thrilled me about as much as the renowned Hudson river does those who see it from the Hoboken shore; that is to say, not in the least. The beauty of the Hudson cannot be perceived from the Statue of Liberty; neither could that of the Rhine be recognized from my viewpoint.

The traffic-soiled water rushed with mountain-torrent speed through all manner of barges and river craft. The impression of placidity which paintings give to this stream was entirely upset, for with

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a low roar it tumbled on, dark and sinister in the gathering gloom. Powerful tugs, pulling at heavily-laden barges, strove to make headway against the current. The element of commercialism plying over the waters of the most beautiful river in the world was too strong to be ignored. The Rhine, enshrined by legend and patriotic sentiment, appeared to my first gaze as an important shipping canal. Thus did reality dissolve the ideal.

Perhaps one of the most appealing characteristics, to the American mind, in anything made by God or man, is size. It is the bulk, measurement and capacity of a thing that attracts us. Hence, instead of going into ecstatic ravings, in regulation guide-book phrases, over the sublimity of the Cologne Cathedral, I confess that the only verbal expression of wonderment which I, and other Americans whom I could overhear, gave forth were ejaculations as to the height of the towers.

After one stares out of countenance the towers and pinnacles of the Cathedral, and has bought various post-cards of varying accuracy and artistic worth from the variety of ancient dames encamped in the porches and about the plazas around the building, one enters for further impressions and greater satisfaction of curiosity. In the shadow-blackened aisles I wandered, gazing at the monumental splendor before me. I realized, aided by a waft of incense-tinted air, that I was in the midst of an inspired work.

Soon the practical asserted itself. I saw the dirt and dust in the corners of the benches, the dampeden,

musty bases of the columns, the coarse, blatant red gowns of the vergers who roamed about, seeking whom they might devour. I realized that the writers of the deluge of impassioned accounts of the age, splendor, magnificence and inspiration of the European Cathedrals did so from an idealistic station. They chose not to see the real for the time. They did not remember the tinsled, gaudy altars nor the artificiality of the stage-like "settings." This is, no doubt, a species of *lèse-majesté* to dare to see the real instead of the ideal in such a high temple of art and faith, as the Cologne Cathedral. Such is, nevertheless, the young spirit of criticism from the New World today. The much-heralded must ever fall a little flat upon its realization. The error or the disillusionment, however, springs often from the subject rather than the object.

As the illusionary invites disillusionment, so the unannounced and unheralded often surprises with delight. It was so with the beauties of Bonn, which I shall gratefully remember as the most attractive city of Germany. I boarded a train at Cologne for Bonn, considering it as but a steamer landing, where I should begin a Rhine trip. I had no high hopes of finding anything there except a huge dinner, but, to offset my slight taste of disappointment at Cologne, I found a feast of "local color," historic interest and natural beauty.

The white buildings of this old town shone and sparkled in the sun which hurriedly dried the effects

of a morning shower. The window boxes burst with their colorsome flowers, the grass in the tiny square scintillated after its freshening bath, and a Sunday-morning atmosphere of peace and quiet hovered over the waving tops of the avenue trees. The old university stretched out at the head of the smooth, vast campus, under whose giant elms walked phlegmatic students, proud in their possession of cap, sash and cane. From the Arndt Denkmal one receives his first spell of the Rhine charm. Overlooking the river, which is clear and calm at this point, the statue of the old patriot contemplates the distant hills about the Drachenfels, crowned by its crumbling ruins, and watches the excursionists, laughing and singing happily upon the shaded boulevard which borders the stream.

Stimulated by the unexpected charm of Bonn, I boarded a slow steamer about to enter the fairy-land of Europe. This time I sacrificed the American method of traveling on express boats for the more leisurely craft which loves to linger among the windings of the great stream.

We soon steamed into the shadows of the Rhine mountains. Romance and beauty came forth, hand in hand, to greet their willing subjects. The terraced vinelands tumbled from the rocky heights down to the water's edge to welcome us. The cool, misty air was surcharged with legends of robber barons and alluring Rhine-maidens. Occasionally the dream was broken by the passing of a chain of coal barges and obscured with the sooty smoke from the funnels

of the panting tug, or by the hum of commercialism rising from the whitened villages nestling under the bosom of the dark hills. It was, as in the Cologne Cathedral, the insistence of the real, the practical and the present. But here the power of illusion was stronger, for nature's temple, even though invaded by the real, still contains more of its charm than the works of man.

After a day of delight in plodding up the rushing path of the waters, I saw the haze-shrouded city of Coblenz creep from behind an obscuring hillside, and extend her little pier in welcome. Accepting her hospitality, I landed and fell into her trap of water-front hotels, set and baited for American travelers. It is strange, the way the Stars and Stripes, floating lonesomely upon its staff over the German hotel sign, will attract its loyal creatures into the web of the spider-portier within the door-way.

After a moonlight walk along the water front, under the blue-black hills over the river and the sinister, half-outlined fortress, Ehrenbreitstein, which peered over the tip of an opposite mountain, I felt that Germany was not such a bad place after all. The evening air carried to the ear the tinkling of glasses and feminine laughter from the broad verandas of the hotels, and the care-free songs of boating parties upon the placid Moselle, until imagination fed the heart with delicacies which must be tasted and felt, not described. The moonbeams, softer and more skilled than any artist's brush, repainted the glorious Rhineland and the time-worn, ancient city,

leaving out the blemishes and wrinkled features discovered by the harsher sunlight.

Like a vague, absorbed perfume, the delights of the evening still lingered with me the next morning as I loitered through my breakfast among the palms of the hotel porch. The Rhine tore down on its way to the sea, as though to make up for its peaceful rest and quiet under the moonlight and shadow of the previous evening. The bells of the steamers rang impatiently for their passengers. The porters ran about the distant landing, seeking their prey. The townsfolk rushed busily about their business and the peasants, pushing in from their country fields produce-laden carts, urged their tired limbs to obtain a point of vantage in the market place. I looked up to the hills, above the rush and turmoil, and sighed contentedly. I was a willing thrall to the Rhine magic.

In Coblenz, one always visits the Wilhelm der Grosse monument which stands in massive ponderance at the point of juncture of the Moselle and the Rhine. From the top of this memorial one sees the confused buildings of the city pushing aside the smaller, crowding houses in their efforts to attain unobstructed air and sunlight. The peaceful, clear Moselle, winding down from the blue-grey hills of France, to the west, invites the traveler to enter her charmed domain and rest under her vinelands, free from the busy traffic of the seething Rhine. In answer to the call of the river, I walked along the bank to see a famed thirteenth century bridge

which extended its lazy length above the stream. The huge stone affair, however, had been so renovated and repaired by modern hands and materials, that scarcely more than its tradition reached back to that dark period. As illusion is what the tourist seeks, I did not evince any doubts as to the age of the venerable pile. Stonework seven centuries old is not a thing to argue lightly with!

Summoning my courage, I entered the labyrinth of alleys and twisting lanes, resolving to see the heart of Coblenz or get hopelessly lost among its arteries in the attempt. "Quaint" and "ancient" become tiresome epithets when describing an old German city. Nevertheless, quaint and ancient were the sights to be encountered. The narrow streets excluded carts and heavy vehicles, but the bales and bags which they should have conveyed were borne upon the sturdy backs of the native women. The overhanging houses shaded the lanes and gave them the gloom and dank smell of tunnels. Here and there, the avenues broadened into tiny squares, where the noonday sun could penetrate. In my searching, I came upon the public market. The push-carts were piled high with wares, which the shrill voices of the old women who guarded them extolled and invited to purchase. The place was alive with the affairs of domestic arrangement. Not a man was to be seen in all this confusion—no more than a sagacious American husband would dare intrude upon a Monday-morning bargain sale.

Frequently the houses extend completely over

the street, and in one case, as though to alleviate the effect of this theft of sunlight and air from those who must walk on the street below, the side of the house was decorated with weird figures of what I believe were intended for old women. Above these Graces was a German couplet, "They were roses once, now thorns; but the circle still goes 'round." I wondered on whom was the joke, and decided upon some undesirable mothers-in-law, for this bit of philosophy was as unexpected as it was charming.

An aged, tottering church demanded, by its air of extreme antiquity, that I enter it. Instead of studying its grotesque architecture, however, I was busied in observing the human nature found there. Some American ladies, in full summer toilette, were standing in the main aisle. Behind them, bowing over the musty benches, were several market women who sought rest, coolness and perhaps meditation in the gloom of the nave. All forgot their desires, however, in the effort to appreciate the dresses of the other women. One old soul, wrinkled and bent beyond feminine recognition, not wishing to lose the continuity of a half-finished rosary, muttered over her worn beads and bobbed her head from side to side, absorbing the slightest details of flounce and trimming, crossing herself occasionally with a toil-smudged hand which paused as some new item demanded her attention. Women are the same, the world over.

A short walk on the pontoon bridge took me across the Rhine to the foot of the Gibraltar, Ehren-

breitstein, where I boarded a "cute" trolley car, more like a mountain burro, which raced up the steep hills and around perilous curves, and landed me breathless in a tiny, back-land hamlet, Arenburg. All who enter Coblenz are thus steered to this little burg to admire a church and its elaborate gardens there. After tramping about the place the remainder of the morning, I confess the greatest amount of rapture and inspiration I could work up was a deep longing for a mammoth dinner. To satisfy this vulgar need, I trudged further up the mountain road, until I was at last rewarded by the sight of a truly German wayside inn, not one tampered with to attract fashionable "foreigners." To devote even a sentence to that dinner would be bad manners, but I confess that the chief event of the day was the noontime repast. The shady courtyard above the sunny, winding road which fell down the hill to the Rhine, sparkling and dancing miles away, was a setting fit for a poet and worthy of a painter.

The remainder of the day took me more deeply into the fairyland of the Rhine. From Coblenz onward, the hills heightened, the ruins became more ruinous, the romantic atmosphere of old legend and history increased. Past the desolate region of the Lorelei pushed the little steamer, under the frowning, imposing piles of masonry once the strongholds of doughty barons and now the delight of tourist's eyes and the extractor of his money through the efficient medium of the caretaker and family.

In the darkling shades of twilight, we touched

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at the bobbing pontoon pier of Assmannshausen, and here I jumped off. This little village is scarcely more than a row of modest hotels, ending in the usual Bad-Haus along the river side. The place was buried under the gloom of the mountains about. Centuries had flown over its lowly site, and left it untouched. I expected to see a band of sixteenth-century Spaniards burst forth from some narrow alley and engage with the men of Burg Rheinstein which reared its stony heads above the blue silhouette of the hills over the river. I arrived unmolested, however, at the gate of a vine-grown hostelry, and soon forgot history in dickering with the host for a night's lodging.

That evening I first appreciated the abundant allusions to "moonlight on the Rhine." I sat in the shade of the heavy vines about the veranda, drinking in the stifled perfume from the closed buds, and gazing upon the dream-scene before me. The orange-colored moon shed a mystic twilight over the valley. There was no shade, no glare. Surely this was not night, but a quality of effulgence such as spread abroad before the creation of the heavenly bodies. It was neither day nor night. It was a sort of dimmed radiance, a halo of enchantment hovering about a magic spot. The rushing of the waters was lowered to a deep bass crooning, the sleeping breeze stirred and sighed in the leafy branches, and the call of a distant night bird vibrated between the hilly walls along the river. It was the still, sweet harmony of beautiful nature.

In the bright sun of early morning I attacked the Castle Rheinstein on the opposite shore, aided by a gasoline launch and a loaded camera. This huge pile, clinging to the rocky hillside like a perching eagle, is fully restored, thanks to its owner, Prince Henry of Prussia, and is a charming museum for the relics of its former glory. Beds of kings, gowns of queens, lances, swords and armors of their warriors fill the cell-like rooms. The mailed glove of old Goetz von Berlichingen, robbed of its bloody terror, lies idle upon a bench beside the steel garb of Emperor "Max." The treasures of Teuton heroes and villains mingle in silent company. The dungeon looked its blackest for me, and the turrets pushed rigidly upward far above my head. What a delight the courts, towers and chambers of these old castles must have been to the children of their lords when they played hide-and-seek!

A lunch on the crest of the mountain, far above the winding, rushing river with its tiny barges and steamers plying up and down, was like dining with the gods. With the hills reaching like giant waves, for the proudest place along the river, with the opulent, stainless clouds just overhead, one forgets about train time and hotel bills.

These two necessary evils, however, recalled me to the village over the stream, and soon I was jerked along the track to Wiesbaden, past the Ruedesheim hill crowned with the dazzling Niederwald Denkmal, and once more into the realm of commerce. A few moments were all I could dedicate to Wies-

baden, that Mecca of the ancient cult of Bathers, just long enough to walk about its flowery park, stare at its fashion-seeking creatures taking their morning sun by coach and four, and admire its pretentious dwellings. A glance at its modernity, its artificiality, a snort of the engine, and I was off to ancient Mainz.

I shall now institute one of my greatest privileges—that of dismissing with meagre sentences cities and their renowned treasures, so dear to German pride and foreign appreciation. The danger of committing a mortal sin, writing a guide-book, gags my mouth and paralyzes my pen. The unconscious is generally the truest, and it should be said that the truest is probably the most delightful. Nature and human nature, both naïvely true and real, are infinitely more interesting than city buildings, boulevards and the conventionalized folk who proudly promenade them. The larger the city, the more artificial its people. They have acquired urbanity at the sacrifice of their human nature, and it requires a tremendous shock for a partial restoration of this, their most genuine quality. Is this the price of modern civilization?

At Mainz, I walked along the tree-lined boulevard, admired and reverenced the old Cathedral of the powerful cassocked Electors, paid my tribute of ejaculations to the new theatre which is the pride of all the burghers, jumped off the narrow sidewalk before the dignified march of the army officers who

promenaded about; but it was only when I blundered through a chat with an old apple-woman in the park near the station that I enjoyed my visit. I attempted to give the bent and withered ancient a sketchy idea of America, and doubt not that after my recital she thought it more a land of mystery than ever before. In return, she confided to me that American appetite boomed her business. They were the only folk, she told me, who were not too proud to eat her apples upon the streets, and on the strength of that national compliment, I bought a dozen.

I jumped next to Heidelberg, and found this stronghold of romance in the throes of what we should call "Old Home Week." All hotels were overflowing, every street was bursting with visitors and the Brooklyn Bridge at evening seemed desolate in comparison to the confusion and uproar to be found in any one of a thousand alleys. I found a little attic corner in an isolated inn where I could spend the night. As yet Heidelberg did not identify itself with any of my hopeful expectations. After a chat with the host upon the beauties of the historic town, I succumbed to his irresistible logic, aided by the charm of a wondrous German dinner and admitted that it *must* be a fine place.

With the gathering of the night, the din of the streets sank into a distant lull. A Heidelberg moon appeared, and the lights of the Neckar twinkled in their most alluring manner. Under the gloom of heavy branches of the boulevard trees, within sound

of the music from the distant celebrators, accompanied by the gurgling of the flowing river, here indeed one could visualize the favorite play of romance, "Old Heidelberg." A stroll about the modest, silent university buildings reposing in their traditions and memories, with a glimpse of the moon-capped Schloss emerging from the foliage of the black mountainside, completed the poetic inspiration of this evening of illusion.

With the awakening morn, reality also dawned, to the utter rout of the impressions of the evening before. The streets seemed narrower and more suffocating, the crowds noisier and more dense. I fled from the town to the scenes of the previous night. All was changed. Motor boats chugged up and down the surface of the oily, sullied river, and distempered children fretted their weary mothers on every seat under the cool trees. The houses over the river, the lamps of which twinkled bewitchingly last night, were today hideous in their bare, blatant prosiness. The old university had lost its dignity and its cramped courtyard seemed desolate and barren. Heidelberg of romance was gone—a whitened sepulchre remained.

After a long search for the charm of yester eve, I gave up before the reality which met me at every street corner, and with a sigh and a new hope, I left for Dresden, the city of art.

The long journey from Heidelberg to Dresden was my farewell tour of the natural Germany. The artificial Germany, the land of big cities, was to

come. The train dragged along the sloping foot-hills into the fir-covered mountains of Saxony, the highest point in the empire. The Neckar dwindled from a stately river into a mountain stream which finally failed us, and left us to complete the trip unaccompanied. Dresden, Leipzig, Berlin and Hanover fell before my attack. Subtract the minor differences in dress, tongue and architecture, and substitute any large city, with its usual amount of local institutions of interest, and you have not only these cities, but all the cities of the world for your consideration. Cities are cities, and cannot vary beyond certain narrow limits. Hence, at one mouthful I complete a tedious half week of touring.

But the best part of the summer was ahead. Having completed my pilgrimage along the broad highway, well-beaten down by countless tourist-feet, I was to be rewarded for my endurance. Friends invited me into a charming by-way, there to live the life of the lowly peasant, close to the hidden heart of the country folk. It requires but time and money to gaze at the exterior of a nation's life, but special invitation is needed before the stranger may enter its inner chambers. Thus, having commented upon the architecture and superficialities of the house, I enter, with my camera and note-book, ready for instant action.

### **Part III.—Among the Peasants**



## AMONG THE PEASANTS

LIKE a huge bird of prey, I wheeled over the German empire, tracing a huge circle, and landed in a tiny Teutonic Arcadia. From the thriving city of Osnabrueck, in central Hanover, I degenerated in my mode of travel from imperial express-trains, to back-breaking and nerve-racking locals, to a still-worse country train which bumped along its ancient track, jumping over broken switches and gaps in the rail, trusting blindly in the engineer, who was conductor and brakeman and any other necessary member of the crew all in one, until it pulled up with a sigh and jolt at the little station of Bad-Essen. From that point my own legs took me along a winding road, five kilometers further inland, and two centuries back, until, by token of a small collection of white-washed cottages buried under giant lindens, I knew I had arrived at Huesede.

My host and his family stood at the open doorway of the first house. I was wise enough not to ruin my initial popularity by talking overmuch in High German, and I did not then possess my later confidence in the Low German of that district, so that I maintained an uncommunicative bearing. Incidentally, regarding Low German, if one will attempt to gurgle "baby-talk" in German, lose his

regard for grammar, and speak quickly enough to hide his deeper ignorance, he may use the Hanoverian "Plat-deutsch" as his mother-tongue!

I murmured my greetings to the receiving line before me. In Germany, one shakes hands upon the slightest provocation, and so I grasped the proffered digits, making sure that when I reached those of the children, mine had a "Groschen" in it for each of them. This *coup d'état* guaranteed my favor. I discovered later, however, that I had exceeded myself, for various children of the village, forewarned of my arrival, were on hand, and profited by my diplomacy.

As I entered the huge doorway, I found myself in a barn. This was the common room of the entire household, including all the various species of livestock. First came the dog's corner, lined with his nest of rye. Next to this was the apartment of a grandmother sow, who welcomed me in her guttural voice from under the pen gate. Then the wood bin interposed itself between the sow's quarters and a little bedroom, formerly that of the household drudge and now used by one of the family who vacated a better room for my use. Opposite this suite, along the other side of the hall, extended the headquarters of two cows, a litter of unmannerly pigs, and the granary—the happy hunting ground of the terrier who found there mice like dogs and rats like boars. Beyond a door, window and trough at this point came the kitchen stove. Overhead, the empty loft reached up into dark shadows. Smoke-tanned raf-

ters, on which perched drowsy fowl and mammoth sides of bacon, reached from end to end of the cavernous "parlor." Beyond the wall next to the stove extended three rooms, stone-floored and plaster-walled. The middle of these was the dining *salon*, and the better of the remaining two was pointed out as my sanctum.

My new home was a typical house of the German agricola. In size, it was the equal of a small barn. The entire establishment was on the ground floor, with the exception of the loft, in which the hens hid their eggs. The building was a perfect oblong, perhaps fifty feet in length and half as wide. Its walls were like those of a fort. The German does everything with an air of permanence. The thick stone sides of our cottage had been raised centuries ago, and they seemed to have defied the hand of time. Huge oak beams were set lengthwise into them, the edges of which came flush with the surface of the wall. On the outside, the square spaces of the wall boxed in by these oak beams were plastered over and white-washed. The surfaces of the beams were blackened by time, so that the cottage had a plaid appearance. The usual roof of the rural districts is thatched, but new insurance regulations are responsible for the adoption of the red tile roof. In such a secluded district as ours, however, it was no unusual sight to see a thatched roof, faded and worn under a score of summer suns and storms, with verdant moss growing over it, seeking to hide the dulness of the straw, and here and there, a tuft of

grass, or perhaps a vine, sprouting from some more fertile spot.

Picture about fifty such cottages as this, half hidden under the arms of century-old trees, and squatting like setting hens along a winding roadway and you see the little village of Huesede.

After the evening meal, which is held rather late in the night, for the long twilight is utilized by these thrifty farmers, it was time to retire, so that we could be up at daybreak—four-thirty! I set my candle on the edge of a mammoth chest which was to serve as my bureau. A crude bench, this chest, and the heavy, bulging bedstead made up the furnishings of my room. Under the bench I found a new pair of slippers set out for me—tremendous wooden shoes, which little tempted me to slip my feet into their cold, cavernous depths. The atmosphere of permanence was here, in every object which outfitted the small, stone-floored room. The sturdy bureau must have been hewn and assembled by some medieval carpenter, and the bed told, by its gigantic members, of generations long outrun which had slept and died in its arms.

I soon discovered a vast difference between this and the hotel beds I had just left. The mattress was a bundle of wheat straw, fresh from the loft, the sheets were of home-made linen which had the surface of sand-paper. It required a few wakeful nights before the bed softened or I hardened. The next morning I was awakened by a deafening din, which I later learned to ignore. It was caused by the reso-

nant, hollow clatter of the many pairs of wooden shoes scuffling over the stone flooring of the large, common room, by the calls of the cows, pigs and poultry for their morning attentions, by the tuning-up barks of the wakening dog, and the shouts of the busy household. I then had the arcadian pleasure of shaving in the courtyard, under an apple tree which shaded the icy well. After the first day of this new life, my metamorphosis into a German peasant began, and I soon learned that rough manners and crude living in no way enter the heart. The one who eats only with knife and fingers, and who has never learned to use pocket handkerchiefs has not, by virtue of this fact, a boorish character.

My hosts, in order of rank, are O'pa, the grandfather of the household, Heinrich, his son, the active head of the farm and house, and his children, Lisa, Fritz, Hinnick and Clamor. The poor wife had recently gone the way of several of her younger children.

O'pa, judging from his gait, disposition and playfulness, is about twenty, but after one hears his tales of the early days, before there was a Germany and when he would have given his life rather than be ruled over by a Prussian, his age is placed at about ninety. He has but one eye, always has a heavy beard, so that I did not know whether a shave was due or I was to regard his growth as permanent whiskers. An old, black cap, which with age is now quite green, sits rakishly on his head and comes off only when the children say grace at table. His

sturdy limbs were strong enough to tire me in a long tramp over the hillsides, and his tanned, seamed face beams with contented happiness on all members of the household. He has a gruff voice only to the dog, and after scolding him, I have often noticed that the old gentleman pats the little beast upon the head to signify that it was not meant unkindly. His greatest joy is in helping the others with their assigned tasks, for he has long been exempt from regular work. When there is nothing of this sort that he can do, he culs sweet clover grass so that in the evening the tired cows may have an extra dish for their supper. He talks with the pigs, who grunt,—I believe in Low German—a secret conversation with him; and all say that, by his mysterious language, he can keep the chickens out of the granary for weeks at a time.

Heinrich, the master of the house, is as spare as his thin, woeful moustaches. He is plainly over-worked in his task of conquering the land of his little farm, and forcing it to yield a living to his dependents. He is inordinately diligent, as sensitive and tender as a woman, and conceals under his coarse shirt the sorrows of the past. I soon found that his delight was to sit with the two youngest boys upon his lean knees, and, puffing on a cigar, vile as only German cigars can be, to amuse his audience by dry, cautious humor of the sort which never provokes a laugh, but always a smile. The farmers maintain a system of co-operation in their work, each helping his neighbor and being helped in turn. The

goodhearted Heinrich, however, suffers under this plan, for he gives far more than he receives, and as this virtue is well known to his fellows, he is cordially liked and generally abused by them.

The commonest phrase of Low German that I heard in my new home was, "Lisa, wo bis a!" It was to call Lisa, the seventeen-year old daughter of the house, to a new task. In the absence of the mother, who had completed her work years before, Lisa was the drudge of the establishment. Her distinguishing qualities were her indolence, her delight in screeching old ballads in a decidedly flat key, and in quarreling with her younger brother, Fritz. Fritz, too, had not yet reconciled himself to a life of labor, and resisted—quite successfully—all attempt to make him work. It was, in both cases, the spirit of youth rebelling against ugly realities. Farm life is hardly ever a pastoral poem, and always less so in Germany, where small holdings, large families, heavy taxes and a neighboring landlord all combine to sap rural delights from this ancient calling. The two remaining children were, as yet, like the terrier, of no particular use, and only something to play with.

All the family had excellent lungs. It seemed that the peasant could never talk; he must always shout. Until I was able to fathom their speech, I thought that every conversation was an altercation. A chat during the noonday meal sounded like a brawl, and an evening card game, the popular "sixty-six," was like a battle, with its din of triumphant

shouts or despairing wails, and its cannonading of heavy, calloused fists upon the deal table.

After the first few days of adjustment to my new life, the spirit of the countryside entered into my soul. Here was the real, the genuine. None of the conventions of the city nor the artificialities of its life were to be found. The little villages of the *Kreis* browsed securely under the protection of the hills which swung in a vast circle about us. Heavy woods clothed the sides of these infant mountains, and the tall trees at their tops heightened the modest dignity which they boasted. It was a rich delight to sit under the edge of this verdant cloak, and gaze over the peaceful plain. The broad, shallow valley seemed like a checker board, with the different colored "sheffel-sads,"—oblong strips of about a quarter-acre—heavy with a summer's increase. The varied produce, rye, oats and wheat, gave to the scene their mellow hues of green and yellow. A still peace filled the air, to be interrupted by no harsher sound than the faint, distant barking of a playful dog, the crowing of the barnyard fowl, or the softened whetting of scythes in the far-off fields. Here one found no single masterpiece of natural scenery. It was a landscape in which a thousand indescribable beauties contributed their charms to the collective whole. It was a beauty of man and nature combined, one that no tourist would travel far to see or buy post-card views of its splendor. It was rather a set-

ting for an invisible idea—peace, content and quietude.

To be in a mineral spring district and not to bathe would be worse than seeing New York and omitting the Statue of Liberty. Hence, I braved my ignorance of custom in taking a German bath, and entered the Bad-Haus. It was like a modest country boarding-house, with the conveniences, or lack of them, for guests who spend vacations and money for recreation, health and cleanliness. A little garden, with tables, shady groves and playing children in it, extended about the building. One enters a lobby, registers, orders a bath and a drink, and while waiting for both sits down to read the thumb-marked comic papers. No less a personage than the proprietor, armed with soap and towel, ushered me along a vast hallway, from which opened large bathrooms. After the necessary preparations, I advanced upon the steaming tub of water awaiting me—to my sorrow! I found that German tubs are to be approached with caution. I stepped into it, and sank waist-high in its depths, barking my shins in my fall. The tubs are set deeply into the flooring, like small pools, and when the artless stranger steps into their seeming shallow water, he plunges into an abyss of sulphurous liquid.

These troughs are made of wood, to prevent the action of the minerals in the water. Through huge pipes the stream rushes into them with terrible force, controlled by valves of giant size. The compartment looked more like an engine room than a bath. After

my ordeal was ended, I concluded that one must either be a philosopher or a wretched invalid to spend a summer's vacation in such a place.

To remain idle in a household busy from dawn to sunset with the countless affairs of farm life was too much for me. I soon became a tolerable farm hand, and was educated into the mysteries of German farming. "Economy" is the unexpressed, dominating character of every act.

No fences are to be found. The strips of land are separated by narrow ditches used in draining the fields, and no protection is needed from the cattle, for they are never pastured. The cows, instead of supplying milk as a chief pursuit, have a multitude of duties to perform. They are primarily the beasts of burden. Horses are too expensive and unproductive. The patient cows drag heavy farm wagons all day, and at eventide give a bountiful yield of milk, as much as do our American beasts of leisure. They are housed in commodious box stalls, as if they were thoroughbred horses, and because of their extreme value, are well fed and well groomed. The German farmer thinks that all his livestock should be better treated than the human members of his family, for they are quite as valuable to him and more helpless than his sons and daughters. One advantage in keeping his cows in their stalls over night, is that the peasant may utilize their manure for fertilizer, and fertilizer is a most important factor in his care of his fields. The careful sowing, with a wide variety of produce, and the laborious fertilizing and irriga-

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tion, result in making the land yield more than ten times the amount which the American farmer obtains from his comparatively neglected fields. The German peasant works continually to build up the strength of the soil in order to provide for the harvests of the future, but the American farmer squeezes dry the native richness of his soil and then abandons his farm—or sells it as city building lots!

Every available foot of ground is cultivated. Along the roadside is planted rye and wheat, and very often even the railroad embankments are thus utilized. In many cases, the luxury of keeping a strong, healthy dog is mitigated by compelling the unwilling beast to drag a small, well laden cart along the flat roadways.

The method of land tenure still bears some resemblance to the manorial system. The landlord, usually a rich peasant, who, by skillful marriage, has acquired a large holding, rents the land he cannot conveniently use, with a farmhouse of the usual unvarying type, for an annual rental together with a few days' labor each week. The usual requirement is three days a week, and as these are not in general specified, the tenant may be called upon to work in his landlord's fields almost whenever the latter so desires. Sometimes this work is "double labor," that is, the tenant must supply two people to work for the owner. In some cases, a nominal sum is paid for this work, and meals are usually provided for the workers. In this part of Hanover, the tenant received

about fifteen cents for his day's wage, this to be deducted from his rent.

Unlike American farms, the houses of the farmers are all located in the little villages, and the fields may be quite a distance away. As farms the size of our middle-western holdings are totally unknown, it is rarely that the hamlets are more than a mile or so apart, for between them lie the fields of the villagers. The manorial system is again recalled when one sees the long strips of land, each one planted with a different grain, and usually held by different tenants. Convenience is not considered in hiring these plots. They are rented by the landlord to the earliest applicant, and it is seldom that any tenant gets all his strips together in a single area. The average holding is perhaps about five acres. In each village, the farmer who owns the most land is given the number one; the next richest owner is number two, and so on. Thus a simple system of financial rating is provided, and each farmer proudly, or humbly, puts his number over the large door of his cottage. This numerical rating is probably used in the tax office of each district.

All the farmers unite to help each other during harvest time, for which service they receive no other compensation than free drinks—usually beer, preferably "schnapps." The grain is brought into the barns as quickly as possible, for the harvest weather is treacherous. A custom very costly to the man who stands upon the wagon load and pitches the sheaves of grain from it to his fellows up in the loft, pro-

vides that for every time his pitchfork is caught so that he cannot release it on the toss, he must buy a round of drinks for all. After a heavy day's work, the poor chap usually owes his colleagues a rousing night's sport in the tavern. The same rule holds for the man in the loft who fails to catch the sheaf on the toss and lets it fall back upon the wagon again.

Neighbors in the small hamlets are usually relatives. They form a large family, and lead a corporate life. When a young peasant brings a bride from a near-by village, no matter how close, she is regarded as a sort of foreigner. At harvest time, one enterprising farmer will rent a steam thresher, set it up in his courtyard, and bring the crops of the village to his barnyard. Payment of threshing is either in cash or kind, usually the latter, for the peasant would naturally prefer to yield a part of his grain than any of his golden twenty-mark pieces.

Next to the village baker, who possesses the only large baking oven in the place, and who bakes everybody's bread, the best-known man, and by far the richest character, is the barber. One morning he cut my hair for the equivalent of three cents and that event was the beginning of our acquaintance. He lives in the two rooms of the old, abandoned schoolhouse. On clear days his shop is under the linden before his door, and on rainy days—well, one does not go out for a shave or hair-cut in wet weather. He is old beyond years, his white hair seems to grow in clumps or patches on his aged head. His face is of many colors, mostly reds. The skin of his face

is a veritable accordion of wrinkles, and the two teeth which he still possesses are insufficient to keep his chin from nearly touching the tip of his nose when he is not smiling, which is very seldom. With all his exterior attributes of age, however, he has the spirit of youth fast within him, and dearly loves a practical joke. Whenever the Vorsteher, the village mayor, comes to him for a hair-cut, the old boy takes fiendish delight in shaving the back of his neck bare to the crown, and persuading the official that such is the style with all prominent statesmen. Each Saturday he carries his kit of razors from house to house, shaving his customers for two and a half cents a face, and cutting their hair at a little above three cents a head. As the farmers need his offices but once weekly, trade is often slack with him and so he amuses himself by catching flies on his kitchen table, or in his greatest joy of all, chatting at the village Wirtschaft, with whomsoever. The old gentleman wears his pewter-framed spectacles on the very tip of his nose, giving an unobstructed sight of his little, shining eyes, which dance in a sprightly manner as he talks. When he is "dressed up," with his hair well soaped, with his old walking-stick in his hand, and a new, bright pair of wooden shoes on his feet, he is indeed a rare sight.

He is the "town character" and is justly proud of his distinction. His spinster daughter who lives with him, scolds, threatens and pets him, and he enjoys it all. He steals lumps of sugar from the larder and frequently stays in the tavern until early morn-

ing, singing to the assembled farmers. He enjoyed the most enviable distinction given to mortal man—that of being the bright spot in a grey day.

One of the most general and permanent things in this changing world is human nature. From this single and very vague idea come the most diverse of all our earthly institutions—human customs. A nation is more distinguished by its customs and language than by its geographical situation. We know, love and hate peoples, not by and for their governmental and political characteristics, but because of the manners, characters, customs of their race.

Of the many peasant customs which one meets with in Germany the most interesting have to do with the two greatest events of life, that is, after birth itself. Weddings and funerals are big events in the village. Upon a death in a household, the nearest neighbor is required to don his long Sunday coat,—of the Prince Albert type, found in every household—put on his silk hat, and call upon all the villagers to tell them of the sad news. Many of them, perhaps, know of the event even before the neighbor, but etiquette demands that not a door be passed. At each house, the messenger of sorrow receives a glass of brandy in return for his news, which, etiquette again insisting, he *must* drink. In a good-sized village, where many calls must be made, the happy neighbor is quite incoherent at the end of his route. At the funeral services, which are usually held in the large, barn-like room where the cattle and live-

stock sit idly by for this short holiday, there is served a goodly meal, which is prepared by the family of the next-door neighbor. The members of the bereaved household are not allowed to do a thing in the affairs of this day. For once, they may have all the time they desire, in which to think, to weep, and mourn. At such a time, the petty animosities of village life are swept aside, and nothing prevents all the people of the hamlet from stopping in at the gloomy door, saying a few stammering words, and receiving some refreshments.

Invitations and announcements regarding weddings are also made by a Sunday-garbed neighbor, and the same ritual is performed for him, only perhaps the glass of brandy is a bit larger. As a rule, the bride goes for the marriage ceremony to the home of the bridegroom, for that is where she is to labor the rest of her days. However, in case the bride owns property, or is to inherit the farm, the man goes to her home, and after marriage assumes her family name. Then upon death of her parents, he succeeds to the property. In this manner the name of the land-owner is permanently identified with the land, and never changes. Although it may not be required by the government, this custom must be a boon to the clerks in the tax office. Of course, a marriage would not be complete without a feast, and in Germany, when experienced housewives prepare a feast for months in advance, it is usually one that provokes dire indigestion and delightful memories! As the bridal couple drive homeward from the church,

if it be a church wedding, they are rich prey for all the children upon the highroad. The children pull the mild horse to a standstill, and stretch out smudgy hands to the laughing groom. He must answer with a few small coins, each of these demands, for which he has long saved.

All the country folk are afraid of the thunder storm. I do not mean that they merely blink their eyes, or stop their ears at a particularly loud burst of noise. They are put into extreme terror by it. As soon as the black clouds creep over the top of the neighboring hills, all doors and windows are carefully closed and locked, for as they believe, the slightest draft is enough to suck in the lightning-stroke. No jests are allowed during the passage of a storm. The dread bolt might fall upon the household where the slightest smile is permitted. In the night, the people get out of bed, dress, light all the lamps, and prepare for a hasty exodus. The valuables are collected, and the family gathers about the animals, ready to lead them out the very moment the stroke comes. This great fear is perhaps accounted for by the fact that one stroke of lightning deprives the peasant of everything he possesses. Tradition and history in his little village tell him of the ruin caused by this dread element, and he readily believes that his turn will come at any minute. The heedless regard of the urban American is explained by the knowledge that, among so many people, the chance of his being the victim is greatly diminished. So when I, in my ignorance of the fear which they felt,

laughed at the folk for their elaborate precautions, I was frowned into silence, and had to remain mute while my hosts prayed for their safety.

Too much cannot be said for the patient diligence and humble contentment of the rustic German. The men of the family out-labor the American farmer, not, perhaps because they wish to, but from the necessity of so doing. Their content springs not from an Arcadian philosophy of the joys in their simple life, but because all about them is found the same condition. In the rural districts there are few summer homes with their idle owners, to instil envy and covetousness in the minds of the farmers. They have been brought up in their work, and to them it represents life. The caste system, while not an institution preached directly to their ears, exists as a silent factor in their life. Few of the lads cast longing eyes towards the cities. Perhaps what I term content may be resignation to a condition which must be faced. At any rate, the peasant is simple, and submissive to the demands of his environment. This spirit of content or resignation may be largely responsible for the lack of progressiveness which is so obvious in the farming country. The people are willing to live in the manner of their forefathers. New inventions are rarely heard of, and the conveniences of American farm life would be branded as impossible, unattainable imaginings. I told one old farmer that in New York, which he had but vaguely known of, there was a building fifty and more stories high. He merely laughed and shook his head. He knew

that in Hanover some houses reached the glorious height of six stories, because his son had seen them, but fifty—it was impossible. "Why," he said, "that would reach up to heaven."

The peasant believes, to a limited extent, in aeroplanes and dirigibles because his weekly newspaper acquaints him with all governmental military inventions. But subways, express elevators, dictographs, piano-players and men who change their clothes three times a day,—all these are impossible! They are as far into the future for him as they were to Christopher Columbus. Conception and credulity have been worn from his imagination by the prosaic intrusion of the facts of village life.

The lot of the peasant woman is vastly different from that of the American farmer's wife. She is not only the housekeeper and the mother of a very large family, but also a most efficient farm-hand. When she is walking or riding in a springless cart to the fields, or to town, she knits socks for her family. She knits and sews before her stove while preparing the dinner, and in company with her husband when he smokes his clay pipe after the work of the day. One day a week, Sunday, she may walk over to her neighbor's house and gossip with her cronies, yet often this day of rest is spent in some less imperative duty which has been neglected during the week. I could explain to myself perhaps incorrectly the submissiveness of the German farmer, but how the housewife can endure her lot with no more protest than a sigh of weariness, is beyond my ken.

Politics, the delight of our rural life, are never discussed. Even in the early days of the European war, I was surprised by the lack of opinion expressed in the groups of anxious peasants about the bulletin boards. The government is a huge, silent thing which one does not speak of, and which is thought of as little as possible. Notwithstanding, I feel bound to state that, despite various and exaggerated reports, the German peasant, the true representative of that virile nation, is no "terrible Hun," no blood-thirsty beast, but is, like all the rest of our human family, intensely human, with all the faults and delightful virtues which make up good fellows.

## **Part IV.—The Retreat Before Mars**



## THE RETREAT BEFORE MARS

THE summer sun, the summer nature, the summer peace,—all gave bountifully of their charms to the children of the earth. Nature sang, the children of nature sang, and in the heart of man there was also a song. Far off, beyond a cloaking horizon, low murmurings resounded, and were carried by a perfume-tinted breeze over the bosom of a summer's landscape. These foreboding voices of evil day were too indistinct,—and the heart of man played on. Suddenly, out of the azure shot the Hammer of Thor. Dark clouds assembled from the bodies of invisible vapors. The storm of wrath was gathered from the deeps of The Powers. Ragged and torn, the whipped clouds scudded over the still-smiling face of a startled nature. War had come, and joy had flown before his lowering countenance. Mars again ruled the world.

Like a dreamer, fallen asleep over the idle oars of his pleasure craft, the people were gruffly awakened by the roar of the Hell which had overtaken them.

The most horrible phase of war is the domestic. At the front, upon the firing line, is to be seen one kind of horror, but far behind the trenches, back in

the homes of the warriors, are infinitely varied species of agony and distress. On the battle ground is but one thought, one desire, one thirst,—to kill. In the home, the entire scale of the emotions is racked daily by hopes, fears, dread rumors,—and more dreaded reports.

At the front, high-priced war artists draw the gruesome and lurid details of the day's work. Human hate, human fear, and the brutish elements of death-strife, all these can be forever told by the facile brush of the war artist. It is beyond the power of brush or pen, however, to catch the momentary throbs of hope, the sickening dread, the dry-eyed realization, and the broken heart. These are the Unutterable. They are found in the cottages, now silent and empty, where formerly was heard the homely sounds of domestic activity and joy. This side of Mars's cloak does not provide feature stories or extra editions in our newspapers. Despatches of this misery are not hurled from capital to province, from town to town. Our deluge of periodic literature contains no drop of this gall. Truly, the most horrible phase of war is the domestic.

Yet, the diminished households have not their present misery from mere sentiment at the departure of a husband or son for the front, but from a more real, tangible need. This is not said to belittle the unspeakable anguish of those innocent victims who remain behind, and wait in their helplessness. The distress of the heart can ill be put into words or

pictures, but material and physical distress may be measured in some way by outward signs.

Generally speaking, at her present condition, Germany is an agricultural nation. In that section of Hanover where I visited, the entire district is given over to farming. Here, as throughout the empire, the soil holds the fortunes of the vast majority of its people.

The summer was an unusually good one for crops. But, towards the end of July, when the time had come to commence the reaping, a prolonged period of rainy weather set in. Every day for over two weeks the countryside was drenched by heavy showers or violent storms. It meant ruin for the peasant farmers. Not only were the crops so thoroughly soaked as to make reaping impossible between showers, but the heavy winds had laid the grain flat upon the earth. The danger was imminent that the crops would "turn under" and resprout in the rich, moist loam.

The last few days of July were tense ones, both agriculturally and politically. "Extrablatts" appeared upon the trees of all public places in the rural hamlets, telling of the Austro-Servian disorders, and Russia's hostile attitude. Rumors of mobilization spread broadcast from village to village, the simple awe of the peasants magnifying the situation in a most grotesque manner. Before Germany had taken any active steps towards arming, rumors reached us that the Kaiser was leading an army to St. Peters-

burg, when at that time he was still away on his summer tour.

The gravity of the domestic situation, however, could be gathered by the manner in which the farmers deserted the dread question of war, and discussed a tragedy closer and more vital to them,—the harvest. By this time the rye had begun to resprout in the fields.

Saturday, the first of August, dawned clear and bright, and the skilled farmers predicted a period of good harvest weather. Preparations for a speedy reaping were made, and the despondent spirits of the peasants arose. But late that afternoon an ill-timed rumor reached the villages that mobilization had been declared. It was not long before the official bulletins posted before the rural churches and announced by village criers, proclaimed the dread truth.

“Es ist Mobil! Est ist Mobil!” was called from field to field, from house to house in the tiny hamlets. The call to arms had come, and the harvest lay neglected.

Before daybreak on Sunday, August second, the men left their country fields and cottages for the army headquarters. The troop trains left at early morning, to save time and to prevent heartsore mothers and wives from going to the stations for a last farewell. There was no time for sentiment. All through the night sounded the pounding of heavy-shod horses on the roads. They were the huge

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well-reared beasts chosen by the army inspectors for military service.

Each year, cavalry officers visit the villages and select the best horse-flesh there for use in the army at the first call. The farmers are paid a moderate price for their animals, and, upon pain of confiscation, are compelled to send the beasts thus designated, and those alone. It is no strange sight now to see a worn, old horse harnessed to a farm wagon with a patient, plodding cow. War calls forth the best horses as well as men.

Throughout the first week of August the country was drained of its young, vigorous men. I found that in a neighboring town in our district, with a total population of 750, more than half of which were women and children, fifty-five men were called forth on the first day of mobilization. This is a typical example of the greed of modern warfare.

By the end of the first week in August, the Landwehr, which may be termed the army for the offense, was moving towards Russia and France, leaving the countryside destitute of its vigor. What few men remained, unfit for rigorous service, were wofully insufficient for the harvesting. Old men and women were not able to mow, sheath, thresh and store the acres of grain, still uncut and over-ripe in the fields. Most of the threshing is still performed in primitive fashion, by the flail upon the barn floor. A deep wound was inflicted upon the agricultural life of the nation, which could not be healed.

I wondered greatly at the patient fortitude of

the lowly farmer in Germany, for his lot was not enviable even before the war. As far as I could ascertain, the work of the year netted hardly more than a bare, meagre existence. The German peasant is not surrounded by the luxuries which are necessities to the American farmer. He lives in a cottage little better than a barn, has no more domestic conveniences than the average camper, eats coarse food, barely covers his body with crude clothing, and is always pinched to meet his rents and taxes. I say I wondered at his existence before the war, but I shudder to think of his future. The recovery is hideous; more taxes, more hard, wearing labor, and fewer results. It was for no lack of reason, then, that a cry of despair arose from the rural folk when war was declared.

From midnight on August first, all trains were in the hands of the war department. Between every station armed guards paced the tracks, and the slightest act of suspicion was followed by a death-shot from these patrols. No regular passenger trains were running. The mobilization trains, plying to and from the army headquarters, were jammed with recruits.

When a thunder-storm mars the pleasure of an outing, one goes indoors and waits until it is overpast. I waited. After a week of waiting, the clouds were darker than ever, and the vision of the Statue of Liberty became more and more alluring. German steamers were held in port and all sailings were

cancelled. It was necessary to seek another outlet, and so I left my lowly cottage and its warm-hearted occupants, to work my way, with a host of fellow tourists, towards Holland, the country of refuge.

I made an eventful trip from the country into the city of Osnabrueck, the district headquarters. Our train was a troop special, and was composed of about thirty cars. A host of young recruits were jammed into all classes of coaches. They rode in freight cars, first class carriages, flat cars,—in fact upon anything that could be pulled over the rails. The men, who were going for their arms and equipment, had pulled down branches from the trees in passing, and had decorated the train with them, so that it had the appearance of a moving forest. No evidence of enthusiasm or willingness to serve was lacking.

The air was filled with lusty war and patriotic songs. The war of 1870 had supplied Germany with a large stock of martial verse. Thousands of hoarse voices shouted "Deutschland, Deutschland ueber alles," "Die Wacht am Rhein," and "Ich hat' einen Cameraden." The two favorites of 1870 were revived, which run, "We'll hit France with a victory," and "As I marched against France in 1870, I smeared Napoleon's boots with petroleum." Another American, recognizing me as a countryman, crossed the station platform to remark, "One would think these chaps were going on a Democratic ward picnic, instead of to their death."

At every station on the way more men piled onto

the crowded cars, and girls ran alongside the train distributing mammoth sandwiches and huge goblets of coffee to the hungry draft. Within a wide area about all railway stations no liquor in any form was on sale. A wealthy cigar manufacturer had his family at one station, and with them he distributed about 1000 boxes of cigars daily, until his supply was depleted. Everybody provided for the recruits *en route*. In the poorer districts, where the folk had not enough food to give the men, contributions were taken, and it was seldom that the peasants did not give a half-mark for provisioning the hungry soldiers. The much-abused term "German efficiency" means largely a hearty co-operation between the warriors and non-combatants.

From crossways and fields along the tracks groups of women and children waved their adieux to the departing trains, and all received hearty cheers in response.

During the first week of the war the city of Osnabruēck was a huge barracks. Here the men streamed in from all directions, reported to their officers and received equipment. Everywhere one heard the crunching of the heavy, nail-shod boots and saw the new, fog-grey uniforms, fresh from the quartermaster's stores. Groups of newly-made troopers, proud in their new possessions, strolled about and enjoyed their last moments of leisure and recreation. Here, too, were to be found no alcoholic drinks, for, from now on, military discipline was superior to personal appetite. In all the parks and

squares, companies of infantry and field artillery were drilling, watched and cheered by thousands of their released brothers. The place looked more like a magnificent military tournament than a rapid organization of Germany's fighting machine. In the cities no business was done, and with the exception of military stations, the smaller towns were deserted.

The citizens of Osnabrueck had to lodge and feed in their homes three troopers each, for which a nominal sum was paid. This was irksome to even the most patriotic, for to feed three lusty youths, with food at war prices, was a severe strain upon national enthusiasm.

Each evening the newly-formed regiments boarded trains for the front. At their departure the excitement bordered upon public hysteria. Townsfolk and recruits vied with each other in cheering and waving, but an occasional sigh and frown betrayed the fear and foreboding that gripped all hearts. The entire populace lived upon the streets these days. The railway stations were the centers of attraction, whither the people went to greet the new arrivals, and to speed the departing soldiers. Each of the drafted men carried under his arm an empty cardboard box. Upon receipt of his new uniform, he sent his civilian dress back to his home in this box, which the government delivered without charge.

It was interesting to study the chalk legends which the men wrote upon the sides of their cars. "To St. Petersburg in seven days!" and "On to

Paris!" were the favorites. One train appeared with "Every mother's son kill a Frenchman!" written on each side. A facetious cigar dealer in Osnabrueck was called to the colors, but before closing his shop he hung over the door the sign, "Gone for two weeks, to visit the Louvre."

The German newspapers were models of the censor's art of suppressing and perverting news. This habit, I found, was indulged in by the press of other nations, but the bias was so evident in Germany that many people refused to be guided by printed information, and preferred whispered rumors to printed despatches. Favorable rumors were given the position of semi-official bulletins, and adverse news, if it appeared at all, was buried deeply under an imposing pile of victories.

"But do the German people want war?" I asked an aged village patriarch before I left the country district. He had been crippled at Sedan, and was, to his villagers, an authority on things military. He answered:

"Nay, Junger. There are those here who desire war, but they are not good Germans. They rule our land and us. If our gracious emperor could see the destruction and havoc that war has already caused this little village, in which not a shot has been fired, he would do all he could to prevent it."

As I looked over the neglected country, crying aloud in its dire need of husbanding, as I heard the sobbing of women in the cottages, and as I thought of the future, I heartily agreed with him.

The route to Holland was well worn by troop trains. In fact, the only manner in which one could travel was to squeeze into a compartment stuffed with recruits—and speak as little English as possible. No passengers could board the trains until the troops were seated comfortably. Women and children were permitted to take what seats remained, or, with their escorts, to stand. There were no through trains. It took me three days to make the journey from Osnabrueck to Rotterdam, which is ordinarily a five-hour trip. It was necessary to make nine changes, for the trains all went in one general direction—to the front.

At each station, the troop trains awaited a telegraph despatch that the track was clear and that it was safe to proceed. It was feared that bombs had been laid under the rails, and no chances were taken. The trainmen, at best over-officious in the consciousness of their much-uniformed position, were now unbearable. Each acted as though he were a chief of staff. All travelers were compelled to show their papers, many were searched and examined closely as to their business. In certain localities, travelers had to wait a week or more, until the first movement of troops had been effected before they could board trains.

No mail could leave or enter the country unless it were unsealed and written in German. Letters that did not meet such conditions were promptly destroyed. In these days strangers were unpopular everywhere. Travelers leaving the country were not

permitted to go from the station platform when making a change in trains, for they were not wanted in the towns. At a border stop, where I was compelled to spend the night, I was honorably escorted to the village hotel by a railway officer. I soon found that his company and assistance were not bestowed out of kindness nor for the tip, (which, however, he did not deny himself) but rather to make sure that I was what I purported to be—an artless, Average American. He engaged in conversation with me in the hallway of the inn, and skillfully persuaded me to show him my passport. After he had made his inspection, he bid me a good night.

At the little village of Bentheim, where I made my adieux to German soil, I slipped out of the depot with some other Americans, to enjoy a few moments of freedom. At every street corner, armed guards paced to and fro. Our advent caused much muttered conversation amongst them, and as we noticed their looks darkening, we hastened to display our passports. We thought it best to do this without any invitation, rather than to risk facing the ugly end of a carbine in the hands of an over-patriotic German.

As our train drew into the Dutch town of Oldenzaal, the worried expressions on the faces of nervous tourists and their fretting wives melted into a genial glow of relief and relaxation. Each one of them had a tale of horror, which, like Jack-the-giant-killer's beanstalk, would grow wondrously over night. Many were the ears back home which would

tingle at their recitals! In Holland, too, the train service was demoralized. The schedules were made up daily. No one knew in advance when and where the trains were going. On the way to Rotterdam, I cruised over all Holland, and it was, I believe, only by blind fortune that I was not also conveyed to the Dutch Indies in my attempts to reach the port.

After a sojourn in this isle of safety until steamer accommodations could be arranged for, (in rivalry with a multitude of other Americans) I bade a farewell to war-mad Europe, and turned my eyes westward.

Holland is a mute sufferer, helpless in her weak position. The watery streets of Rotterdam were stagnant. Mile upon mile, along the once-busy Maas, the idle barges and steamers are moored. The streets are thronged with jobless sailors and barge-men. They collect in silent groups upon the quays, waiting and hoping. Huge stacks of baled merchandise stood ready for the opening of trade, but they were long standing and well tanned before they moved.

The Dutch army was, since the first days of war, in a continued state of mobilization. One half of the eligible men in the tiny kingdom were called upon to pace their frontiers. The government allows the men to draw lots, before calling them into service. Tickets, double in number than the required force, are prepared. The men then draw their slips, and

those who pick a number higher than half the total are required to serve their colors.

Quite naturally, at such a time and in such a place, one heard many and terrible tales of personal adventure. Without employing Yankee skepticism over much, I found that many were to be discarded as delirious fancies. Most of these yarns of personal experience which, like bad coins, were circulated among the small change of many travelers, were of too strong a national bias. They tipped too much to one side or another to hold a great deal of truth.

One old couple, however, were truly pitiful victims of circumstances. Both man and wife were past sixty-five, and led a retired life in Belgium, whither they had moved from Germany long before. Their only son lived in Germany, and was an officer in the army when called to his colors. During the first week of the war, the aged husband was in a hospital where he was nursed by his wife. Before he had fully recovered, he and his wife were given twelve hours in which to leave the country. They went home to collect their personal property, and found the house razed to the ground. The enraged Belgians recognized them, and it was only by the aid of a Belgian officer, a friend of the retired gentleman, that their lives were saved. They traveled into Holland in a cart, and lived in a Rotterdam hotel until the man's health permitted him to come to America and begin life over again—at sixty-five! Not a single word of hate or complaint did either of

them make against their condition. They seemed to appreciate the point of view of the Belgians, and with dry eyes looked upon the veiled future. "If I only had known," said the old man, "if I only had known! I might have been able to bring more than a pocketful of money for my Frau and self." One land they had deserted, another had foresworn them, yet they turned to a third fatherland with courageous hope.

As we steamed into the English channel under a huge flag of the Netherlands, we were approached and stopped by a cordon of British torpedo destroyers. All hearts stopped beating, for the ship slowly turned around, and headed back upon her churning wake. We soon resumed our course, however, after being inspected by naval officers, but were compelled to creep under the pale Dover cliffs, close to the shore, for the free-way was studded with mines. Within the stone breakwater at Dover, a host of grey, sinister battlecraft lay waiting, with fires up, in readiness for instant encounter. The little harbor resembled a hornet nest; once the scene of thriving commerce, and now dark beneath the pall of Mars.

Slowly the humped hills of England slid behind the deepening waters. Now Europe was gone; a thing of the past. Before was the open sea; beyond, America.

\* \* \* \* \*

I had been to Europe. I had seen Germany, inside and out. I had gazed upon one short scene of the great tragedy of our century.

Reader, I met you first at a wharf in Hoboken. I now leave you, at the wonder-gate of the New World, just within sight of the Statue of Liberty. If you hear a strange mixture of the Doxology and Star Spangled Banner bursting from my parted lips, smile not—it is because I am the Average American!

*SO HERE THEN ENDETH "AT LARGE IN GERMANY,"  
AN ACCOUNT OF THE AVERAGE AMERICAN'S SUMMER  
ABROAD, AS WRITTEN BY ROBERT BOLWELL AND  
DONE INTO A BOOK FOR HIM BY CHARLES J. ROSEN,  
IN THE MONTH OF MAY, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD,  
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN*









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